# A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

April, 1999

Communication. It seems anytime people are asked what their organizations could do better, communication ranks high. Good communication requires both an understanding of what is important and an ability to write or speak about it effectively.

Our goal at ABS-Minneapolis is to develop and refine a keen understanding of what's important to our customers and communicate often and well about those things.

To meet customer information needs, we will be reaching out-asking for views and opinions. To the extent that our customers respond, we will be better able to communicate

ALSO INSIDE: PURCHASE CARD NEWS, REALTY INFORMATION, HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDELINES

well. In other words, communication is a two-way street. We need help in recognizing what works and what doesn't. Often, the customer reaction that could help us improve our processes never gets back to us.

So, we begin this new initiative with the ABS AD-NOTES. Please help us make it a successful vehicle to improve communication and meet your needs for great administrative support. All of us in Minneapolis want to do everything we can to help the programs in all M&RP agencies reach their goals of the highest quality service to the public.

David Gradick Business Site Manager ABS-Minneapolis

PLEASE REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THESE ADNOTES
FREELY. THEY ARE ALSO AVAILABLE ON OUR WEB SITE:
(http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/abs) UNDER "LIBRARY"

The Official Newsletter of USDA, APHIS, ABS, MINNEAPOLIS, MN SERVING APHIS, AMS AND GIPSA

Volume No: ONE
Issue No:ONE
APRIL, 1999

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### The Regionalization Transition Begins

The schedule for the Eastern Regional Hub to open in Raleigh is set for July 19. Realistically, many of you are transitioning now. As people accept and move to other jobs, the Regions and field offices will require more and different types of assistance from ABS-Minneapolis. We have made plans and are working through them to ensure all offices are supported and assisted. We are pulling out the stops for going the extra mile and helping meet the needs of the Regional and field offices.

# What's going to make this work for the field, the region, and ABS-Minneapolis?

Patience. Positive attitude. Flexibility.
Communication. Listening. Understanding.
Decisive action. Professionalism. All the things we know and do everyday. We will just have many more opportunities to practice them.
Aside from this general list, this is how you can expect us to respond:

- 1. We will be available for phone calls.
- We will not return any requests
   (except certain documents, such as
   personnel benefits forms that must
   be completed and signed by the
   employee for legal reasons). We will
   clarify information and complete request
   forms with you.
- 3. We will only ask the field for information they have at hand -- we will do the "legwork".
- 4. We will bring recurring problems and/or highly sensitive, critical issues to ABS-Minneapolis Management Team's attention and work with you and/or your management to coordinate and resolve any other issues of concern to you.

# If you need immediate assistance, please feel free to call our Regionalization Response Team:

Annette Maros 612-370-2226 Nancy Bradford 612-370-2473 Denise Barnes 612-370-2147

## "IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN'' ---George Elliot

"Addressing" the Issue--Confused About Where to Direct Mail to ABS-Minneapolis? (Formerly Known as FSO & HRO)

When addressing mail destined for APHIS Business Services (ABS)-Minneapolis, please address your mail (both on the envelope and on the correspondence) as follows:

USDA, APHIS, ABS Att: Contact Name and/or Team (this is **very** important) Butler Square West - 5th Floor 100 North Sixth Street Minneapolis, MN 55403

Adding the contact person will ensure speedy delivery and quicker response to your request!

**Also:** When sending faxes to Minneapolis, please make sure the contact name and/or team is specified on the fax cover sheet.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. We look forward to serving your needs better than ever!

#### Solid Wood PackingMaterials (SWPM)Collections

Due to increased infestations of devastating, tree killing pests in shipments containing solid wood packing materials, PPQ requires these materials to be inspected and certified pest free upon entry into the country and is required to collect a user fee for the inspection.

When collecting fees for the Importation of Solid Wood Packing Materials (SWPM), send the check with an APHIS Form 94 (Record of Public Funds Received) to: USDA, APHIS, User Fees, P.O. Box 955683, St. Louis, MO 63195-5683. Be sure to record the fourth through seventh digits of your office's accounting code, followed by a slash and then 0395 in the purpose/Accounting Code column on the Aphis Form 94 (i.e., 8503/0395). This is necessary to insure the funds as properly recorded in the accounting records.

If you have any questions, please contact the Accounts Receivable Team Helpline at 612-370-2291.

# NOTIFICATION TO VS OFFICES FOR COD AND SUSPENDED ACCOUNTS FOR USER FEE DELINQUENT DEBTORS

Every month a current, updated list of accounts that are on cash-only and suspended status are faxed to all VS area offices. Since these lists are cumulative, it is not necessary to save prior lists. When determining a customer's payment status you need only refer to the current month's list.

When a customer comes in for service, you can call ABS-Minneapolis Accounts Receivable Team (ART) to get the current status. We will check our on-line system to verify whether a payment has been received from the customer.

You may refer customers to ART to resolve their payment problems. Delinquent account holders receive monthly notifications from NFC. The customer also receives notification from ART when they are placed in a suspended status. The phone numbers for customers to call appear on their monthly statements.

If a customer works with ART to resolve their delinquent status, we will notify the customer by phone. You may call 612/370-2236 (Lucy Currie) or 612/370-2294 (Carol Anderson) for the latest account information.

### **Depositing and Transmitting Collections**

APHIS provides many services for which it collects a fee. The funds collected can be in the form of a credit card, cash, check or money order. The collection can be the result of an advance payment for a future service to be provided, a payment received upon completion of a service or the result of a bill issued for services provided.

Good cash management practices recommend that employees deposit collections or transmit collections for deposit within 24 hours, if practical, but <u>no later than</u> the second workday from the date of receiving the collection. Please mail only checks and money orders. Cash should not be sent through the mail or converted to a personal check. Employees should convert cash collected to a cashier's check or money order. No part of the collection should be used to pay for the cost of purchasing the cashier's check or money order. Instead, these fees can be reimbursed by the completion of an SF-1164 form (Claim for Small Expenditures).

Additional information on collections can be found in the Budget and Accounting Manual, Chapter 10, page 46 or check it out on the Internet at <a href="http://www.aphis.usda.gov/bad/">http://www.aphis.usda.gov/bad/</a>.

### **PURCHASE CARD NEWS**

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, USDA HAS BEEN WORKING HARD TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW PURCHASE CARD MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PCMS) WITH THE NEW CONTRACTOR, NATIONS BANK. ALTHOUGH SOME PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERED, WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS, SLOW BUT SURE. YOUR LOCAL AREA PROGRAM COORDINATOR (LAPC) WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED WITH THE LATEST INFORMATION. FOLLOWING ARE SEVERAL ITEMS OF INFORMATION REGARDING PCMS IN GENERAL.

### PCMS REPORT SAMPLES

Currently, the Purchase Card Management System (PCMS) charges appear differently on CADI reports versus the Detail Transaction Reports (I-1's). This inconsistency is being addressed by ABS, Budget and Accounting Service Enhancement (BASE). To help you interpret your reports, here is a sample of how the data appears:

### <u>CADI</u> reflects the detail as follows:

BRA NCH	PRO JECT	OBJ CLASS	NFC SYS	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	MAN- HOURS	PAYEE NAME	SCHEDULE NUMBER	OBLIGATION AMOUNT	ESTIMATE AMOUNT
01	030	2670	PRCH	ORDER NO & LINE	ORDER NO & LINE 230423731800 N00000000000DI				23.30	

As currently appearing, this data does not provide any relevant information for identifying and tracking the transaction.

#### Detail Transaction Reports (I-1's) reflect the detail as follows:

BRA	PRO	OBJ	NFC			MAN-		SCHEDULE	OBLIGATION	ESTIMATE
NCH	JECT	CLASS	SYS	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE	HOURS	PAYEE NAME	NUMBER	AMOUNT	AMOUNT
01	030	2670	PCMS	CARDNAME/PCHDT	DIANA HALSEY	102198	RADIOSHACK	945944	22.96	

This detail identifies the budget object code, cardholder name, purchase date, vendor and the amount of the charge.

If you have difficulty identifying these transactions or have any questions, please call Sheila Hensley at 612/370-2298 or Liz Groth at 612/370-2158.

## Purchase Card Limits

There are two important thresholds that purchase cards are subject to:
-- a single purchase limit and a monthly limit.

The <u>single purchase limit</u> is the largest amount a cardholder is allowed to spend on a single purchase. This limit is determined by the procurement warrant or authorization granted to the cardholder. Amounts greater than \$2500 single limits are only granted to personnel that have received advanced training in procurement and acquisition processes and regulations. Non-procurement personnel are granted the micro-purchase threshold of \$2500.

The *monthly limit* puts a threshold on the total purchases a cardholder can make in a one month billing cycle. It is a control mechanism in the purchase card system that is tied to budgetary controls and the overall management of the office budget. This limit is determined by managers and supervisors and depends on the projected needs of that office. Managers and supervisors should examine this limit more closely to insure that the card-holders are authorized a monthly limit that will prevent necessary purchases from being denied by Nations Bank because the limit was exceeded. This will also avoid embarrassing moments for the cardholder in these situations. Monthly limits can easily be raised by just having your manager or supervisor send a request to your Local Area Program Coordinator (LAPC).

# PCMS CHARGES ON THE ACCOUNTING REPORTS

When a Purchase Card Management System (PCMS) cardholder initiates a purchase, the transaction is posted in a pre-established "profile" accounting code, where it will remain until the cardholder reconciles and approves the charge. These transactions automatically transmit to the Central Accounting System within 5 days of being posted in PCMS. When the transaction is reconciled and approved, an adjustment is created in the Central Accounting System, reversing the entry from the "profile" accounting code and posting it to the appropriate accounting code.

There is nothing in the accounting report detail transaction information to differentiate between the reconciled/approved transactions and those waiting to be reconciled/approved. Therefore, to avoid duplications, please reconcile your accounting reports before initiating accounting adjustments.

If you have any questions, please call Sheila Hensley, if you are with APHIS, at (612) 370-2298 or send an e-mail to Sheila.A.Hensley@USDA.GOV. If you are with AMS or GIPSA, please call Ken Barth at (202) 720-3729.

# New Purchase Card Program Will Provide Replacement for Imprest Funds

With the implementation of the new Purchase Card Management System (PCMS), APHIS and GIPSA will begin to phase out Imprest Funds. Likewise, the Department will eventually eliminate the related NFC Imprest Fund Payment System. The PCMS is a paperless, on-line reconciliation credit card system that also provides check writing capability. This check writing feature will provide the substitute for Imprest Funds. This new way of doing business will have lower administrative operating costs while still providing the necessary levels of oversight and accountability. The convenience checks are issued to authorized cardholders and are similar in appearance to personal checks. The checks are written against the cardholder's account and reconciled in PCMS. These checks **are for official use only** and can be used for reimbursing employees for local travel and other miscellaneous expenses (which were previously reimbursed through the use of Imprest Funds). The checks can also be used for spot awards and emergency salary payments to employees.

Offices currently utilizing Imprest Funds need to take steps to obtain the new purchase card and related convenience checks. When this has been accomplished, the current Imprest Fund can be closed out. Closing out your Imprest Fund consists of completing a final OF-1129, Cashier Reimbursement Voucher and AD-661, Cashier Sub-Voucher Register. These forms, along with any uncashed Treasury reimbursement checks and a money order for the cash on hand, are then sent to the ABS-Minneapolis Payments Team for APHIS and, for GIPSA, to the Washington Financial Services Branch. If you need additional information regarding the closing of your Imprest Funds, call Mike Backstrom at 612-370-2195 (if you are with APHIS) or Wilfredo Rivera at 202/720-4296 (if you are with GIPSA).

Some offices have never utilized Imprest Funds and those employees have, instead, submitted SF-1164's (Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business) to ABS-Minneapolis for issuance of a Treasury reimbursement check. Supervisors/Managers in your offices can now designate someone within your organization to receive a purchase card and convenience checks in order to pay these types of expenses locally. This will allow a faster, more efficient process to reimburse employees, as well as reducing administrative burdens and processing costs for the agency.

If you need information regarding the issuance of Purchase Cards and convenience checks,	call
Megan Phommahaxay at 612-370-2499.	

#### WWW RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Each month at ABS-Minneapolis, we have an **Internet Users Group Meeting**.

For about twenty minutes we discuss one topic that can help people do their jobs better. By popular request, we're making the handouts from these sessions available to ABS customers. Currently, we have handouts for the following topics:

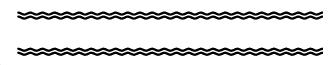
- --Searching the Web
- -- Back to School
- --Agriculture On-line
- -- Career Development
- --On-line libraries
- -- Finding People, Places and Organizations

If you'd like a copy of the handouts from these sessions, please contact Bill Rosenfeld at "Bill.F.Rosenfeld@usda.gov", by phone at 612/370-2093, or by fax at 612/370-2295.

#### **CLAIMS TEAM INFORMATION:**

# ATTENTION: AIRPORT INSPECTION FACILITIES

Recently, there has been an increase in the amount of tort claims for damaged luggage and other personal items caused by the conveyor belts at airports. The ABS-Claims Team recommends that you buy a Polaroid camera to keep at the airport for taking a picture of travelers' damaged articles. Many airport facilities have already purchased a camera. The inspector takes a photo of the damaged article **BEFORE** giving the Form SF-95 (Claim for Damage, Injury or Death) to the traveler. If the traveler submits a claim and we ask you for information, you'll have a photo to substantiate the severity of the damage. This process has proven to be a useful tool for us when making a liability determination. Be sure the ABS-Claims Team, Minneapolis address (Butler Square West, 5th Fl., 100 No. 6th St., Minneapolis, MN 55403) is in Block 1 of the SF-95, so the traveler knows where to submit the form. You may purchase a camera with vour Visa card.

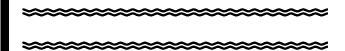


### PARIS AND PRESTO REPLACEMENTS

We have succeeded in finding replacements for our personnel action (PARIS) and procurement request (PRESTO) systems. Neither was Y2K compliant and we took advantage of the situation by developing what we feel are systems better able to serve the needs of our customers.

We have been working with a contractor to customize new applications developed for us using Lotus Notes/Domino. Besides being Y2K compliant, the new systems will have the same functionality and will look somewhat like the originals, with expanded electronic data transmission and reporting capabilities. We expect to continue improving and expanding these systems with your help. In the coming weeks training and implementation will begin for the new applications.

The first versions will be available for you to see in the near future.



# **Are You Ready For FTS2001?**

The new contract to replace FTS2000 was signed in December 1998. The transition to the new vendor will begin in June 1999. The change will be transparent for most users.

To prepare for the switch to FTS2001, there are some things that you can do. If your telephone service is provided by a GSA switch, someone at your site should review your inventory of lines and services on your account. You can review your inventory for your site (serviced by GSA) by viewing GSA's Telecommunications Ordering and Pricing System (TOPS). By reviewing the statements online, you can identify phones or features that you do not need or you could identify toll charges for calls that could be made through the FTS system. Recently, letters explaining the process were mailed out to the various APHIS offices along with your TOPS login ID and password. If your site receives telephone services via a GSA Switch and you have not received these instructions, please call the contacts at the bottom of this article.

If you receive the FTS2000 "This is Not a Bill" report from AT&T, please review the report to make sure that only your telephone numbers and calling card numbers appear on the report. Also, verify that the Agency Account Number (hierarchy code), located in the upper right corner of your report, is correct. You can review your Agency Account Number by going to the Hierarchy web site at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/fts2000/. This will take you to the Federal Telecommunications System 2000 site. Once you are there, click on Hierarchy Home Page, then click on Hierarchy by Program. Here you can look up your correct Agency Account Number (Hierarchy) example: 123400xxxx. If you find any discrepancies, please call the contacts at the bottom of this article. (Note: only phone numbers and calling cards with activity during the month will show up on the report.)

Who should you call? Michelle Fernandez **612 370-2390**. Her e-mail address is: **michelle.r.fernandez@usda.gov**. Diana Halsey can be reached at **612 370-2122**. Her e-mail address is: **diana.r.halsey@usda.gov**.

More information on FTS2001 to follow in the next ADNOTES.

# **№ Notice to Regional Offices or Area Offices Regarding Telephone Service Pic Restrictions**

#### **Definitions:**

**PIC** - Primary Interlata Carrier - which provides long distance service.

**Restriction** - Limits who can request changes to the telephone service.

If you set up telephone service with the local telephone company for your field offices and have placed a <u>"PIC"</u> restriction on any telephone lines, your service cannot be transitioned by the new vendor to FTS2001.

These restrictions need to be <u>removed</u> before the local exchange carrier will allow the new vendor to change the PIC.

This must be completed prior to <u>June 1st</u>. Failure to remove the PIC restrictions could result in an interruption of your long distance service. If you have any further questions, please contact Michelle Fernandez at 612/370-2390.

# News from the Realty Services Team

The Realty Team has been going through a number of changes in order to better serve our customers and align ourselves with their needs. With the upcoming Regionalization there are several issues which the Realty Team believes our field program offices need to be aware of. For immediate information, we are on the Web at www.aphis.usda.gov/mb/abs. If you don't have web access, please feel free to call your Realty Program Contact listed below for any questions concerning agency leased space, GSA leases, GSA liason or lease management.

#### The Realty Team USDA, APHIS, ABS-Minneapolis WEST NORTH/CENTRAL George Hartson Mick Turk Rick George Realty Specialist Realty Specialist Realty Specialist Ann Dreier (612) 370-2105 (612) 370-2102 rge.a.hartson@usda.gov (612) 370-2112 Realty Specialist mick.f.turk@usda.gov rick.h.george@usda.go (612) 370-2104 ann.b.dreier@usda.gov SOUTHEAST Terry Gmiterko Realty Specialist Garv Crook (612) 370-2103 Realty Specialist (612) 370-2108 terry.a.gmiterko@usda Vacant Realty Coordinator (612) 370-2 @usda.gov Darrellyn Gereau **HHM Specialist** (612) 370-2219 Maria Zapata darrelyn.r.gereau@usda.gov Realty & HHMTech (612) 370-2475 FAX: (612) 370-2336 maria.e.zapata@usda.gov Effective 2/1//99 (612) 370-2083

For employees located in the Eastern Regional Hub, the Realty Service Team for VS, PPQ, WS, and AC please contact:

George Hartson (612) 370-2105 (VS)

Terry Gmiterko (612) 370-2103 (PPQ)

Rick George (612) 370-2112 (WS &AC)

Gary Crook (612) 370-2108

Household and Office Moves - Darrellyn Gereau (612) 370-2219

### **NEWS FROM GSA**

GSA has come up with new pricing guidelines for office moves. The responsibility for paying moving costs has shifted significantly to the programs from GSA. Please reference the move cost guide listed below for the new pricing guidelines.

OLD PRICING NEW PRICING

MOVE	PHYSICAL	TELECOM.	ABOVE STD	PHYSICAL	TELCOM
SITUATION	MOVES	COSTS	BUILD-OUT	MOVES	COSTS
1. LEASE	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
EXPIRATION		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
2. AGENCY	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
EXPANSION WITH		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
AVAILABLE CONTIGUOUS	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
CONTIGUOUS		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
UNAVAILABLE CONTIGUOUS	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
SPLIT ASSIGNMENT	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
ASSIGNMENT		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
DISPLACEMENT OF ANOTHER	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.
EXPANDING AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
DISPLACED	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.	EXP.
AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
3. CONSOLIDATION THAT ARE					
CLIENT INITIATED	GSA	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING	MOVING
INITIATED		AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
GSA INITIATED	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA
4. EMERGENCY	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA
5. R&A SWING SPACE	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA	GSA

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#### NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT REGARDING GSA

We are currently reviewing all GSA billings for space paid from the Department's Central Rent Account. The review includes any changes for FY99 and anticipated changes and space/rent increases for FY2000. The review is being completed in anticipation of the Department's Office of the Chief Financial Officer turning over the control and management of each agency's portion of the Rent Account to the agency for payment and account management.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGE--STREAMLINING!

We have received approval from the Department to discontinue the use of AD-222 - Space Evaluation Checklist. You are no longer required to submit these annual reports. Please contact Maria Zapata, Realty Services, at 612-370-2475, if problems surface with maintenance, mechanicals or the structure.

#### **HOUSEHOLD MOVES**

Did you know the Domestic and International moves are coordinated through the Realty Section? Our Household Move Coordinator, Darrellyn Gereau and her assistant Maria Zapata, are available to provide you with all the information you need to plan your move. The Realty Web site, which can be accessed under the aforementioned web address, has an extensive Household Moves page which will provide you with all the information you need to know regarding your move. If

you feel more comfortable discussing your concerns, you may call Darrellyn at (612) 370-2219 or Maria at (612) 370-2475.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**LIFE INSURANCE OPEN SEASON** - An open enrollment period for the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program will be held from April 24, 1999 through June 30, 1999.

- What kinds of elections can I make during the open enrollment period? During the FEGLI 99 open enrollment period, you can elect any life insurance that you don't currently have.
- Is there anything new available during the open enrollment period? Yes. Until now, Option C coverage, which is coverage on your eligible family members, was limited to \$5,000 for your spouse and \$2,500 for each eligible child. You can now elect up to 5 multiples of those amounts, making the maximum amounts available \$25,000 for your spouse and \$12,500 for each eligible child. You have to elect the same number of multiples for each family member.
- When will my new coverage go into effect? Coverage elected during the open enrollment period will become effective the first pay period beginning on or after April 23, 2000. You have to be in pay and duty status during the pay period before the coverage becomes effective.
- Will I have to start paying the premiums for my new coverage right away? No. You don't have to start paying the premiums for your new coverage until it goes into effect in 2000.
- What if I don't want to change my coverage? Do I have to do anything? No. If you don't want to make any changes, you don't have to do anything. You will keep exactly what you have now.
- What do I have to do if I want to elect more coverage? If you decide you want to elect more coverage, you must fill out the election form showing ALL coverage that you want, not just the new coverage. Any coverage not shown on the election form will be considered to have been waived.
- Will I be able to continue this new coverage if I retire? In order to continue FEGLI coverage when you retire, you must retire on an immediate annuity and you must have had the coverage for 5 years of service right before you retire or from your first opportunity to elect it.
- Where can I get more information? In April, the following information about the FEGLI Program will be sent to the home address of all eligible employees: a revised FEGLI Booklet (RI-76-21), a special FEGLI 99 Open Enrollment Period Pamphlet (FE 74 A) and a special FEGLI 99 Open Enrollment Election Form (RI 76-27). You can also obtain information from the Office of Personnel Management's FEGLI website: <a href="http://www.opm.gov/insure/life">http://www.opm.gov/insure/life</a>.

# **AD-349 Employee Address Form**

Beginning January 1, 1999, all employees were required to start having their payroll checks sent to their banks, via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT-see separate article), unless waiver forms were submitted.

The AD-349, Employee Address Form, is used to change the employee's address and paycheck mailing address only. Please provide your name and social security number when submitting the form to the Processing Section.

The top portion of the form should be completed when changing the address of where you want your leave and earning statement (and any other mailings) sent. This will not, however, change the address for your savings bonds. Please provide your **new address only**. Include your city, state and zip code.

Likewise, the bottom portion of the form should be completed when you want your payroll check sent to a mailing address other than your bank. If you complete this portion of the form, it will cancel the current direct deposit, so be sure that the address you state is correct.

We will make your change of address effective with the future date identified on your form or the pay period it is received in for processing.

The AD-349, revised dates 11/90 or 12/93, are acceptable. If you have any questions regarding this form, please contact your servicing processing associate. It is important that your address information be timely updated.

Employees are <u>encouraged</u> to make changes to their addresses and checks by using the Employee Express system. Further information can be obtained on Employee Express by accessing the APHIS web site: www.aphis.usda.gov/mb, or by contacting your servicing processing associate.

### SF-1199A, Direct Deposit Form, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

The SF-1199A, the direct deposit form, Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), is used to have an employee's payroll check deposited at a bank. It is also used to set up allotments (i.e., savings accounts, loans, etc.). The SF-1199A, revisions of either June 1987 or later, are acceptable. In addition to the above form, the FMS 2231, Fast Start Direct Deposit Form, revised September 1991, is also acceptable.

Public Law 103-356 requires that all federal employees, both current and new hires, be paid by direct deposit. (A waiver form may be submitted to ABS-Processing for those employees unable to have direct deposit.) Currently, at least 75% of our customers have their paychecks direct deposited. The benefit of having direct deposit is that payroll checks are electronically delivered on the Monday or Tuesday of the actual pay week to your bank of choice. With home delivery of a paper check, you are not paid until Thursday of the pay week.

Proper completion of the form is necessary to avoid any problems, especially misrouted checks. Please follow the instructions below when completing your direct deposit form.

**Section 1** should be completed to include your name, address, daytime telephone number, name of person entitled to payment and, in block C, your social security number. Please indicate the type of account, either checking or savings, the account number and, in block F, federal salary for payroll checks deposited or "other" for savings and/or checking allotments. If the direct deposit is an allotment, please complete block G and indicate if you're establishing, changing the amount or canceling a current allotment. Also, please indicate whole dollar amounts only. Be sure to sign and date the payee/joint payee portion.

**Section 2** should include the department and agency for which you work, along with the address of your work location.

**Section 3** should be completed by your financial institution or bank.

Employees are encouraged to change or cancel current direct deposits by using the Employee Express System. This system is designed for employees to have more control over the processing of their payroll needs via the Internet or telephone.

**A reminder:** if you choose to use Employee Express, **do not send in the paper form,** as this will only complicate processing of your payroll forms.

Further information can be obtained by accessing the APHIS web site: **www.aphis.usda.gov/mb**, or by contacting your servicing processing associate regarding Employee Express.

Remember: if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your servicing processing associate. We're here to help better serve you, the customer.

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

# **How Can We Help???**

This is the first issue of the revised ADNOTES and we'd like to make sure that it meets your needs. Please take the time to answer the following questions and let us know your thoughts:

What type of information would you like to see in future issues?

What did you like about this issue?

What didn't you like about this issue?

What would you change in our next issue?

Do you have any ideas for a name change to this publication?

Do you have access to the Internet?

Would you rather receive the ADNOTES via the Internet? Via E Mail? Via printed copy?

### Who Is Your "Point of Contact?

(We're in the process of updating our Customer Address Directory and asking each Office for a point of contact. If you haven't yet been called yet, please contact Archie Crandall at **Archie.A.Crandall@usda.gov** or you can call him at **612/370-2006** and let him know who your contact point will be.)

**Please send your survey to Bill Rosenfeld at:** USDA, APHIS, ABS, Butler Square West, 5th Floor, 100 North Sixth Street, Minneapolis, MN 55403

Thanks for giving us your input.